

BATHYMETRICAL DISTRIBUTION.

Only slight materials are at present available for drawing any conclusions as to the Bathymetrical Distribution of the Cephalopoda. This is due, in the first place, to the fact that it is only quite recently that any record has been kept of the depth from which specimens were obtained, all our museums having considered it sufficient to indicate the localities of the various species.

Since the introduction of deep-sea dredging, however, a change in this respect has set in, but even yet the collections of the Challenger and of the United States Fish Commission and Coast Survey furnish by far the greater proportion of the accurate data available for discussion, although, no doubt, the investigations of the "Talisman" and "Travailleur" will furnish welcome additions when published.

Another consideration, however, greatly diminishes our real knowledge in this matter, and it is the fact, which has often been commented on in the present series of Reports, that it by no means follows that specimens procured necessarily inhabit the greatest depth reached by the dredge. In the case of animals so gifted with locomotor powers as the Cephalopoda it is peculiarly impossible to obtain certainty in this respect, and, consequently, every recorded instance of the occurrence of a member of this group in deep water requires to be discussed on its own merits, and by the aid of whatever collateral evidence may be available.

Before proceeding further it will be well to give, in a tabulated form, the information yielded by the Challenger collection, supplemented by whatever could be obtained from the literature of the subject or other trustworthy sources. No general statements, such as "shallow water," "moderate depths," have been admitted, but only those in which a definite number of fathoms was recorded; had the former been included the list of species found above the 100 fathom line would have been much more extensive.

The figures indicate the depth in fathoms, and the letters the sources of information; thus:—

Ch = Challenger collection.

K = "Knight Errant" collection.

P = "Poroupine" collection (Expedition of 1869).

S = Professor G. O. Sars.

T = "Triton" collection.

V = Professor Verrill.

Val = "Valorous" collection.

The numbers enclosed in square brackets indicate recorded depths which are almost certainly erroneous.